

# A New Friend With Old Enemies

by weasel20

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Summary: A man appears as Rei is about to be raped only to be saved by a stranger with unexplainable skills. Who is he? And why is he so afraid to get closer to them? Can they break through his shell in time to save him or will he end up a victim to something far more terrifying than Them?

## 1. Saving the Damsel

Don't own jack shit. Fuck off.

Japanese

\_English \_

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><p>"TAKASHI!" was all Takashi needed to hear to know that something bad had happened outside while he was getting some money for gas.<p>

"Rei!" he thought as he rushed outside with his bat ready to help Rei defend herself from them only to see her with a knife to her throat held hostage by some gangster wannabe.

"Wow you got some nice tits girly."

"Let her go!" Takashi yelled trying to get Rei away from the rapist.

"Now why would I do that?" The man questioned, "Here's what's going to happen you little shit. You're going to drop the bat and give me your bike. If you do that I might think about letting your little girlfriend go." The man ordered as he groped Rei and pressed the knife into her throat allowing a crimson tear to make its way down

her throat.

"Fine. Fine. Let me fill it up first." Takashi said to try and buy some time to think of a way to get both Rei and him out of this situation.

After filling the bike up Takashi said "There the bikes full now please let her go."

"Why would I do something like that? I ain't had some pussy this fine in a long time. I'm gonna enjoy taking her and showing her what a real man can do." The gangster said as Rei suddenly began thrashing harder in the man's grip screaming "NO!"

"What's this? You ain't popped her yet? HA! Now you definitely are never going to get her back. I'm going to break her into nothing but my perso-" The gangster was interrupted as a shadow separated from the bushes behind him grabbing his knife hand and extending it before bringing his left hand in and shattering his elbow by bending it 90 degrees beyond what it was meant to do before taking the knife with his right hand from his now nerveless fingers, spinning in a tight circle before plunging the blade into the man's skull.

"\_I don't believe that the little lady appreciates that.\_" The man said to the new corpse as Rei broke free from the gangster's now dead hands and jumped into Takashi's arms. "Hello," He said to the stunned students "I'm Conall McLoughlin."

"Thank you." Takashi said as he tried to comfort Rei from her trauma. "I'm Takashi and this is Rei." As Takashi stood there he examined the stranger who called himself Conall. He had brown hair, and round blue eyes depicting him as a foreigner, he was about 170 centimeters tall with a slim build. He was wearing military combat pants and a green and black t-shirt with a skull with 2 broadswords crossed behind it.

"Do either one of you speak English?" Conall asked before seeing the clueless looks on their faces. Rei and Takashi were in English class but neither one had a good grasp of the language yet. Michael sighed before pointing at the Rei and Takashi with two fingers before pointing at himself with one before putting all three in a group and 'hopping' them along as if asking permission to follow them. Takashi looked at Rei asking if she would mind having a male stranger with them after what had just happened.

"If I'm going to be scared of everyone I might as well stop now and let Them have me." Rei replied before pantomiming that he could follow them. Conall smiled and thanked them before asking them which direction they were going by pointing a finger out at every road individually and then shrugging his shoulders. Rei knew where they were and pointed at where they were going before noticing the hoard of Them that lay between them and the road.

Conall and Takashi saw Them at the same time and as Takashi started to quickly mime to Conall that they had to go a different way Conall simply signaled for them lto get on the bike and to follow him. Rei and Takashi looked at Conall as if he had lost his mind as he walked head on into the hoard singing a song that they couldn't understand.

As Conall approached the hoard he began singing in a normal voice "Axes flash and Broadwords swing, shining armors piercing ring, horses run with a polished shield, fight those bastards till they yield." As he hit the first line of Them he lashed out with an open hand to the face of the first one as he reached for him resulting a nasty crunch before he fell to the ground never to rise. As Michael continued to unleash hell upon those that would harm him and his new companions he saw that there were more than he could comfortably handle with the others behind him. And the bike was a crotch rocket which meant it had less off road abilities than his. Upon realizing his mistake Michael stopped singing mid-verse and began throwing Them into one another with such grace and speed that Rei was astounded.

After fighting his way through 20 or so of Them Conall signaled for the two of them to follow through the path before it was shut by the rest of the hoard. As Takashi started up his bike Conall darted into and ally way and reappeared as they drove past on a Honda 650cc Nighthawk. Conall sped up and drove beside them for a moment signaling to Rei that he would follow them before slowing to fall in behind them.

An hour later it was well past dark and Conall noticed that Takashi was beginning to drift in his lane a little bit. Conall sped up and signaled a stop and began to mime that they needed to stop for the night. Neither one put up a fuss knowing that it was true. Conall continued to mime that the house across the street, a three story affair with a walled in yard, would be the best for them to crash in for the night after he cleared it. As he kept miming Rei noticed that his miming included or bastardized many of the normal signs from her sign language class.

Deciding to take a chance in hopes of furthering communication with the man Rei began to use some of the signs from her class while finger spelling anything that she didn't know the sign for. As she began Conall stopped his signing first adopting a puzzled look on his face at what she was doing before grinning like a mad man before enthusiastically replying in a very fluent manner. A far cry from his previous broken signs and exaggerated motions. Rei quickly stopped him telling him that she had only had one year of the class and while she could read finger spelling quite well she didn't know enough signs to hold a conversation before having to revert to finger spelling.

Conall quickly instructed them to take the bikes inside the wall as he made a distraction for Them that had closed in on their location during their discovery. Conall reached into his saddle bag quickly grapping a small firecracker and a lighter before moving a short ways from them. He lit the fire cracker before throwing it just in front of the group before signaling for Takashi and Rei to move quickly. The fire cracker went off releasing several bright flashes and a muted high pitched whistling sound not that different form a flash bang.

Takashi settled his bike first as Conall darted through the gate before closing it as quietly as he could as taking some rope from his pocket he quickly tied the gate shut. As he finished he saw Rei having some trouble with his bike as it was much heavier and bulkier than most bikes in Japan. Conall walked up and gently took the handle bars from Rei before shoving the bike forward over the hump in the

ground that Rei had been stuck on before kicking the stand out and resting the bike.

As Conall fixated himself working on the bikes Takashi quickly dragged Rei to the side before asking "What was that?"

"What the hand signs?" Rei replied

"Yeah. Is he deaf or something?" Takashi asked having taken German as his foreign language.

"I don't think so." Rei said, "I think that's the only language that we have in common. Neither of us took English for middle school so the only thing I can come up with is that he only knows English and Sign Language. And maybe a couple phrases in Japanese considering he introduced himself after he rescued me."

"So what were you saying outside?" Takashi asked while hoping that Saeko remembered the English class she took in Middle School.

"Oh, he was saying that you were swaying a little in your lane and that you were probably unused to so much constant exertion for prolonged periods of time. This coupled with the mental trauma of what we are going through it'd be better if we made camp here for the night instead of risking being hit by one of them while we are tired. He saw this house and thought that after clearing it that we could stay here for the night before taking off in the morning. It has a second story for lookout and a wall to help keep Them out." Rei said before yawning causing poor Takashi to nearly die of blood loss from seeing the amount of cleavage she had displayed during her stretch.

As they finished their talk Conall walked up before holding out a fist to Takashi. Takashi held out his hand as Michael dropped the spark plugs from his bike into his hand. Seeing his questioning look Conall signed as Rei translated that the bikes were much less likely to be stolen in the night if they couldn't start.

Conall turned around before either could say anything and grabbed a small bag beside his bike and began making his way to the front door. Reaching the door Conall tried to open it but it wouldn't budge. Mumbling something that Takashi didn't think was a compliment Conall dug through his bag and pulled out a small case which he opened to reveal a lock picking set that Takashi was sure couldn't be legal. With the air of a seasoned pro Conall quickly set to work on the lock which gave in under 2 minutes.

Seeing this Takashi couldn't help but become worried about this man that had appeared out of nowhere with skills that weren't part of any job that Takashi knew of and that he had allowed to follow them and who, for the moment, was leading them into a stranger's house with who knows how many of Them inside. Finally realizing the position that he had put himself and Rei in Takashi's palms began to sweat as he envisioned all sorts of horrors this man could inflict on them and that they would be powerless to stop.

Conall, who was ignoring everything but the lock and the threat inside, pushed open the door before quickly making his way through the house room by room checking for blood, bodies, anything out of the ordinary that could possibly indicate a presence other than

theirs inside the house. Room by room was cleared under his expert eye before he advanced to the second floor repeating the process. After he had disappeared from sight Rei saw Takashi's face and mannerisms were off before asking him, "What's wrong?"

"Well, the world is going to hell, the streets are full of man-eating things that would happily kill us, you were taken hostage and almost raped right in front of me and I couldn't do anything about it, and to top it all off I'm risking you and me with a man we've never met before who appeared out of nowhere and is able to kill a man with his bare hands without batting an eye about it afterwards. And now we are breaking into a strangers home about to spend the night in said home with aforementioned killer and there's nothing to stop him from doing whatever he wants to with us." Takashi said bluntly.

"He risked his life to help us out. If all he wanted was to hurt us he could have saved himself a lot of trouble and done it when he first met us. He killed that man and all I felt was a slight pressure as he was killed. He could have do the same thing to you and me if he felt like it." Rei said.

As she finished talking Connall came back signing that the house was clean. Takashi and Rei followed him back into the house before they split up. Takashi headed to the kitchen to find some food for dinner while Rei headed upstairs to claim a bed and shower. Connall watched as they separated before heading to the garage.

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><p>Connall's Viewpoint<p>

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><p>I had just finished sweeping the house before signing to the chick that it was safe for now. I watched as they separated, they guy seemed to be more wary of me now as his mind finally processed the events of the day. I left them alone in the house to give them space so they'd feel safer. I started to look around the garage for any tools that I might need later or were of better quality than my current set. As I was rifling through my third chest of drawers I stumbled upon a gold mine of high quality metal already pre-formed into semi-weapon like shape.<p>

Excited by my discovery I began my search with fresh vigor trying to find the metal working tools that had to be around somewhere. After all the guys gun had only so many rounds and with how he didn't even reach for it when his girl was in trouble he obviously had no comfort with the damn thing leading me to believe that he was either a peacenik pussy or had no experience with the damn thing making it a liability instead of an asset.

The metal would allow me to make weapons for them that way we could be much more quiet and they would never run out of ammunition. The only problem was what weapon for the guy. The girl was obviously a martial artist with how she handled her mop handle and never let it go after her attack. She was used to using a staff or spear then and a spear was only a staff with a pointy end attached. I could fashion her a much more robust spear and the Takashi kid could make due with a mace since he'd been doing pretty well with his bat. The bat was inefficient when used as a weapon since its increased surface area

led to decreased force making him have to hit the same zombie multiple times.

With a plan set for new weapons I returned to the house to find the two teens in the kitchen surrounded by food which would help replace the calories lost by the excitement and constant activity throughout the day. Rei saw me as I entered the doorway and waved me over before handing me a plate and silverware and waving at the food inviting me to eat. I grabbed some ham looking meat , green beans, and other bits of leftovers from the food provided. As I sat down Rei and Takashi glanced at each other and as I tucked into my dinner Rei began to sign who I was and other questions about my history.

"My name is Connall McLoughlin." I said in Japanese before switching to sign language due to my limited vocabulary in their language. "Do you have a group to get to? Or are you alone as well?" They looked at each other then at me in askance to my reply. "I have a long and bloody history with nothing even remotely resembling a normal life or childhood. So you'll have to understand if I don't wish to repeat myself.

Rei and Takashi seemed startled at my answer before Rei asked how old I was. I told her I was 21 before she replied saying that she and Takashi were both 17. She continued with saying that their group ranged from 17 to 25 years old. Finally answered my question on if they were in a group or not. I finished my food and signed that if they still wished to know some of my history they would have to earn my trust first and rejoin their group if they still wished to know.

"Not like Vigilate Mortem can do anything about a breach in confidentiality now anyways." I muttered to myself. Rei and Takashi looked at me as I said this so I quickly changed the subject asking what weapon types they preferred since Takashi's six-shooter was too limited to rely on. Rei signed that her father taught her how to use a spear and she had never lost a match while Takashi had no formal experience with weapons.

I shrugged about his revelation since I had expected as much. As Takashi finished his dinner he yawned which set Rei to yawning as well. I smirked at this before telling Rei to go to bed and to take Takashi with her. She blushed a little at the implication hidden within the innocent statement so I ribbed her a little more signing that she had to stay quiet so as not to attract anyone or anything so if Takashi was too good they would have to stop. Her blush went atomic and I laughed as I took my dishes to the sink. Takashi seemed pretty dense as he started to fret over his friend asking her if she was ok. As Rei and Takashi left I signed that I'd take first watch before heading to the garage to occupy my time through the night.

## 2. Meet the group

Don't own jack shit. Fuck off.

Japanese

\_English \_

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><p>As he awoke Connell stretched and wiped the sleep from his eyes before checking on the weapons he had spent all night perfecting. Only sleeping when the metal needed to cool. Both weapons were simple in their make and yet seemed to possess an elegance that would normally be reserved for museums or ballrooms.<p>

The spear had a fine hardwood shaft sanded smooth with engravings to allow a solid grip even when wet. The wood was stained a light maple color allowing the beauty of the wood to shine through. The spear tip itself was slightly larger than what was normally used with Celtic designs engraved into the metal on both sides. The mace was of identical design with six ridges bulging from the head equidistant from each other to better crush skulls with alternating Celtic crosses and 4-leaf clovers between the ridges.

To the right of both were 2 short swords with curved blades reminiscent of the Gurkhas khukuri. Far less ornate than its sibling weapons with only a skull engraved in the fattest part of the blade and runes of unknown meaning carved into the metal near the hilt. The wooden handles were heavily engraved with deep grooves to ensure a solid grip even when covered in blood and gore.

Connell gathered his wits and after a quick bath in the downstairs shower he returned fully clothed and sheathed the khukuris in and X across his back. As he left he grabbed the completed weapons in his left hand and a medium duffel bag in his right which had a large, long piece of metal wrapped in cloth disguising its identity. As he entered the main house Connall heard small thumps as someone finally awakened and then heard the shower start in a different side of the house indicating both teens were up.

He headed to the kitchen to prepare breakfast for the small group content that they would be down by the time he finished. Takashi came down first about an hour later and sat at the table before staring at the weapons on Connall's back and the two on the table. As he ogled the new weapons Rei came down enticed by the aroma of a western style buffet breakfast of pancakes, orange juice, milk, and other breakfast foods of the west.

As she sat down Connall came over with plates piled high with food for them to eat. As they ate Takashi kept staring at the weapons on the table trying to figure out where they came from as he was positive that they didn't have weapons like that the night before. Rei finally noticed the spear as she ate due to her not being a morning person. Her eyes widened as she looked at the beautiful work laid before her.

Connell smirked at her reaction before signing for her to finish breakfast first before asking too many questions. After she finished she immediately bombarded him with questions such as where did he find them and did he know what he had found. Connall replied that he had made them overnight before apologizing that they were as plain as they were due to his limited time and tools. Rei's jaw dropped as he told her this. He continued that the spear was for her and the mace was for Takashi. These weapons would serve them much better than their improvised ones.

Rei was astounded at the beauty held in the simplistic design of the

spear. As she hefted the spear she marveled at the exceptional balance and the ease with which she could maneuver it. Takashi took up his new weapon as well to test it's balance and weight. While the spear was of similar length to the mop handle Rei had been using, Takashi's mace was only 2/3 the size of the bat while being of similar weight to the bat. Connell gave them a little time to familiarize themselves with their new weapons before getting their attention and signing that they needed to move while there was still plenty of daylight to search for the rest of their group.

After reassembling the bikes and checking for any faults Takashi led the small group out of the gates and they began their trek to regroup with the rest of the Takashi's friends. As they were driving along one of the service roads that ran parallel to one of the many waterways that crisscrossed the city Takashi saw a hoard of Them crowding to one end of the bridge. Takashi strained his eyes in hopes of maybe being able to help and noticed a wooden blade flashing in the morning light with trails of crimson blood following the blade. His eyes followed the blade to its wielder before realizing that it was Saeko! Takashi gunned his engine warning Rei to get ready as he sped for the slope to get up to the bridge his friends were on.

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><p>Connell's Viewpoint<p>

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><p>I saw Takashi all the sudden gun his throttle and speed off for the slope up to a bridge that was already covered with zombies.<p>

"\_Shit! What the hell is that stupid fuck doing?!" I\_ cursed under his breathe as I tried to understand my friends apparent death wish. I looked at the hoard closer and saw a several people fighting desperately against the hoard to save their lives. I saw Takashi and Rei were going to approach from behind the main group but they were never going to make it in time at the rate the group was loosing ground. I saw an abandoned tow truck with its trailer still down forming a crude ramp. As I sped towards the ramp all I could think was that this was a bad idea, as my tires left the ramp I knew it was a very bad idea, and as the bridge covered with zombies that began to look towards my noisy airborne bike I began to wonder if I would survive this very bad idea.

As I landed I was forced to lay the bike down and fall off as it continued wiping out a line of zombies ahead of me. I skid to a stop and as I opened my eyes thoroughly surprised at how well I could breathe and move my extremities I looked up and saw a beautiful young Valkyrie slaying many of the zombies with a wooden sword. As I watched her slay several zombies with precision and speed I realized that I was neither dead nor dying and that my new friends needed my help or we would all die. As I attempted to rise I felt a stirring in my guts from watching the young lady continue her slaughter.

For the first time in many years I panicked. I leapt up from the concrete ignoring the screeching in my bruised muscles and drawing my twin kukris. I sprinted into the hoard to protect the group and give the zombies a new, closer, target. Unleashing skills that I had buried and thought forgotten for years I unleashed hell on earth upon



the monsters that sought to hurt my new friends. I slayed zombie after zombie with as much speed and skill as I could to keep them back and before long I was joined by the maiden from before, her long black hair swaying in her wake as she killed and pushed them back away from herself giving her time to smash her wooden sword into their skulls releasing them from their unnatural state.

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><p>As Connell and his new friend slaughtered the zombies from the front Rei and Takashi finally arrived at the rear of the, now much smaller, hoard and dismounted the bike before beginning their own campaign against them. Takashi led smashing his new mace into the skull of the first monster utterly crushing the skull and causing the brain to hemorrhage, as much as one can without a beating heart, leaving the zombie totally dead instead of the mostly dead it was a few moments before. Takashi marveled at the efficiency of his new weapon as he had only applied a quarter of the force he would normally use.<p>

As Takashi was momentarily distracted by his new weapons capabilities Rei moved past him her spear singing as it cut through the air before burying itself deep into the frontal lobe of the next thing in line as it approached her friend. Rei marveled for a moment at the ease with which the blade punched through the tough bone before removing the blade from the thing's skull with a sickening squelch. She then swung the spear severing multiple heads in one swing thanks to the unique extended blade of the spear. Takashi recovered from his short spell of amazement as Rei continued to dispatch multiple zombies with ease however she was getting too deep into the mob of bodies to swing her spear effectively.

Takashi quickly removed his mace from the bloody mess of bone and brain matter and ran to Rei's aid as one of them finally got lucky and snagged her shirt. As Rei let out a startled scream Takashi's mace almost immediately found a new home in the monster's skull. The two childhood friends engaged in a macabre dance of death with Rei slaying them at a distance with Takashi swooping in on any that came close to her.

They quickly made their way through the rest of the hoard and came to a stop next to Connell and Saeko. Saeko saw her friends and they dropped back slightly as there were not many of them left and Connell appeared to have no trouble slaughtering the unnatural monsters. Saeko quickly embraced her lost friends as the last of the monsters died under Connell's blades. The rest of the group quickly joined in welcoming their friends unexpected and timely arrival.

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><p>Connell's Viewpoint<p>

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><p>As the last of the zombies fell I twirled my weapons to rid them of their coating of blood before sheathing them. I didn't move as I fought back the demons of my past before finally shutting them away once more. 'Why now?' I thought as I struggled to regain my breathing, 'I've been in much tighter spots and it shows itself now after a couple scrapes and a little fight, this makes no sense. I'll

have to worry about it later." I thought as I turned to meet the rest of Takashi and Rei's group.<p>

They seemed like a tight bunch if the group hug was anything to go by. As they broke up their hug I stepped towards them content to wait until they noticed my presence before intruding on their moment. God knows they wouldn't have much to celebrate in the coming time.

The girl with the wooden sword was the first to notice me and brought my existence to the attention of the rest of the group as they had begun to question Rei and Takashi about the time they'd had since they had been separated if I understood the inflections in their speech correctly. Rei saw that they had noticed me and began to introduce me to her friends with gusto. She introduced the sword wielder as Saeko Busujima a glasses wearing pink-haired girl as Saya Takagi, a gentle looking blond haired soul as Shizuka Marikawa, and a dark-haired boy with what looked like a modified nail gun as Kohta Hirano.

I bowed to the rest of the group and introduced my self and the group that had just met me tried to say hello in their language before I waved them off signing to Rei to please explain my limited communication skills.

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><p>Rei saw that Connall was quickly getting out of his depth in the language and intervened when he started to sign frantically trying to explain his problem to the rest of the group. Rei quickly stopped her friends from inundating Connall with questions that he wouldn't understand and explained that he didn't speak Japanese except for a few choice phrases and that she had to interpret for him using sign language.<p>

Saeko asked what was his native language in hopes that they could find a dictionary somewhere so that they could learn to speak to one another which would save much time and would allow him to communicate to everyone instead of just Rei. Rei said that his native language was English and asked if any of them had taken any foreign language classes for English.

Seako smirked before looking to Connall asking "\_How did you stumble across our friends?"

><em>To which Connall stared at her for a moment before replying "\_I stumbled across these two at a gas station where they were trying to refill their tank on their motorcy-" \_Connall stopped mid-sentence before turning and scanning the ground for his bike before finding it on the ground several meters away under several corpses.

As he ran to it pulling the fresh bodies off of his baby he noticed that the front forks were bent, the tank cracked and leaking gas onto the pavement, wiring harness ripped apart as the headlight had been removed from its proper position in a none too gentle manner, and several other problems that would have been difficult if not impossible to fix even before the outbreak.

The group watched as Connall's shoulders slumped and they began to approach him with Saeko asking what was wrong. Connall replied, "\_This was a gift from my uncle and my father before they died. I've fixed it more times than I care to count and with the exception of

the lessons they taught me as a child this was the last link that I had to them." \_Saeko looked at the bike seeing several things wrong with it even with her inexperienced eyes. Connall sighed as he began to remove every thing that he had from the bike including his backpack and small duffle bag with a long cloth wrapped bundle on top.

Takashi, getting the translation from Saeko, walked up to him and put a consoling hand on his shoulder. "It'll be o.k. As long as you have your memories of them they will always be with you." Even without a translation Connall knew what Takashi was trying to say. As he pulled the last of his items from the saddle bags and packed it away safely in the confines of his bag he began to feel better knowing that his father would be upset if he dwelled on a piece of equipment that had served its usefulness and was now only dead weight; with this in mind Connall backed up and lit a road flare from his pack before igniting the gas as he walked away.

"\_So what's the plan now cap'n?" \_Connall asked with his usual manner. The rest of the group sensed his change of mood and began to look to Takashi unconsciously for leadership.

"I don't know." Takashi said "It's too late now to keep looking and with all the noise we've created we need to move but I don't know anyplace around here, Do any of you know a place we can crash at?"

>"Oh, I know a place." Shizuka said "It's my friends place. She lets me stay there sometimes when she's gone for a long time and needs someone to watch the place for her. it's not far from here and it has this big car like a tank."<br>"Sounds like a good place. Can you lead us to it?" Rei asked.  
>"Absolutely, It's not too far from here."<p>

A couple of blocks later Shizuka proudly presented her friends place. It was a modest 2-story house with a walled-in yard, and a large, American made Hummer in the drive way. Connell smirked as he remembered riding in those when he worked for the organization. The things were absolute gas-guzzlers if not modified properly and while they looked large on the outside they actually had very little room on the inside.

Connell once again volunteered to search the house for any presence of Them inside and, without listening to a word of rebuttal, quickly went inside after Shizuka had unlocked the door. Quickly searching the house from top to bottom Connall came back and told them that the house was clean.

After getting settled into the house the girls decided to take a bath while the boys looked around the house for anything useful. As squeals echoed from inside the bathroom Kohta enlisted Takashi's help prying open a couple of cabinets. In the third cabinet of the T.V. room they stumbled upon a treasure trove of ammunition of all kinds. Connall stumbled into the room after hearing the screeching sound of metal as the boys pried open the cabinet, seeing the ammunition inside the cabinet he began to look around for where the gun safe might be. Kohta spotted a likely culprit hidden slightly behind a rack of movies. Takashi and Connall moved the rack and there stood a metal gun safe with a combination lock and 2 key slots.

Connell smiled as Kohta's face fell upon seeing the locks, there was

no way that they could pry open this safe without heavy machinery or explosives. As Kohta consigned himself to not getting any new weapons Connall simply pulled out his lock picking set and began work on the key slots. After about an hour the second of the key slots gave under his assault leaving only a combination lock between them and their prize. Connall left the room then and went down stairs to the kitchen and came back with a small glass cup. He spun the dial several times with the glass pressed against the metal door and his ear pressed against the glass. After moving the glass several times he found where the disks were located and began the slow process of cracking the combination to the lock.

As he worked Kohta and Takashi left the room to give him the silence that he needed to properly hear the disks clicking into place.

Kohta and Takashi waited in the kitchen letting Connall do his thing. Kohta tired of the silence began to ask where the strange man had come from. Takashi spent the next 15 minutes telling Kohta of their travels from the attempted rape of Rei to Connall following them to the group and jumping the gap using the ramp made by a tow truck. Before Kohta could ask any more questions about Connall and his strange skill set they heard a loud, joyous cry from the upstairs room. They both rushed upstairs to find Connall grinning like mad before an open weapons locker.

Kohta began to salivate at the plethora of weapons in the locker. Connall's smirk seemed to grow as Kohta listed the weapons by name and how illegal they were. No matter what language two men spoke there would always be the common language of weapons between the two. Connall walked away to try and find a way onto the roof but was ambushed in the darkened hallway by something. Without thinking Connall threw off the arm and spun his assailant in a circle before grabbing their throat and throwing them up against the wall.

As he held the assailant there he heard a groan and a distinctly feminine voice say something and then hiccup. Getting his bearings Connall saw that it was the tall blond of the group, Shizuka if he remembered correctly, wearing nothing but what God gave her with a towel at her feet thrown there after being torn from her body by his reactions. Connall blushed mightily as he saw her beautiful form before him and realizing that she was naked immediately spun around with such force that he face planted into the wall.

As he crouched down nursing his bloody nose he felt a weight settle itself across his shoulders and felt two distinct lumps against his back and heard her soft voice mumbling something with an occasional hiccup in the mix proving her intoxication. Not one to take advantage of women he picked her up and carried her to her room and laid her down on the bed. As he covered her up he marveled at how she could sleep so easily when so much had changed in the course of a couple days. he left the room quietly and headed for the kitchen.

However as he passed the sitting room he heard a rifle shot and spun on his heels before sprinting to the bedroom that had been designated the watch room. He saw Kohta and Takashi apparently arguing with each other before he interceded and angrily gestured as to why Kohta seemed to have a death wish. Kohta handed his rifle to Connall and pointed at a house about half a block away that had a huge mob before it. Connall brought the scope to his eye and saw what Kohta was trying to protect. A young girl no older than 6 was kneeling next to

a man with a stab wound to his upper chest. Judging by her crying and the mans unmoving body he was probably dead.

Another zombie was slowly making his way to the young girl and Connall shot it before it could cause the young girl harm. As he handed back the rifle to Kohta Takashi grabbed his mace and shotgun and stalked to the door yelling something over his shoulder. Kohta replied in an affirmative and began to shoot again. Grabbing his attention Connall gestured for him to shoot until Takashi had the girl and then to go silent to avoid as much attention as possible before he ran downstairs to tell Takashi the plan.

Rei and Saeko were both at the front door talking to Takashi before Connall interrupted them.

>"<em>Slow down." <em>Connall said, "\_The only thing you will achieve by going off half-cocked will be your death."\_ Takashi faltered for a moment as Saeko translated what was said.

>"Then whats this great plan of yours? We have to hurry if we want to rescue that girl." Takashi yelled.<br>"\_Kohta is playing sniper and with each shot more of Them will be attracted here. Now I will go first..." \_Saeko slowly translated the plan to Takashi as Connall laid it out. And in less than a minute Takashi was headed across the street as Connall walked down the middle of the road.

When Takashi reached the yard that the girl was in he saw the open gate and signaled for Kohta to watch his back as he closed it. After dashing forward and shoving several of Them back with his bare hands causing them to stumble and falter in their push for a moment he quickly slammed the gate shut before approaching the young girl.

"Are you o.k.?" Takashi asked.

>"My daddy won't get up." She screamed "Why won't he get up?"<br>With no way to sugar coat the truth Takashi said, "Your dad is dead. But he died the way any father would, protecting his child. Will you please come with me? The gate won't hold much longer."

>"NO! I want to go with daddy. He said he'd never leave me."<br>"So you would waste this chance that your father gave you? You would spit upon his sacrifice?" Takashi said wincing at how callous he sounded.

The little girl stopped for a moment and with tears in her eyes she quietly whispered "No." Takashi grabbed a shirt from the clothes line and draped it over the body and placed a sprig of gladiolus on his chest. Takashi picked up the girl and told the cooling corpse "Don't worry for your daughter. She won't be joining you for as long as I can help it." Remembering what Connall had asked him to do he knelt one last time and placed his hand on the mans forehead and said, "Quietem et pacem." before heading to the wall with the girl on his back and her dog in his jacket walking along the wall watching as Connall walked straight into the mob singing all the while.

\* \* \*

><p>Connall's Viewpoint<p>

\* \* \*

><p>As Takashi made his way back along the wall the zombie were attracted to his footfalls which was where I came in. As he made his

way back to the group I walked straight to the singing "Let the bodies hit the floor". I stopped just shy of the first line of zombies and drew my blades as I began the intro to the song. When I hit the first crescendo I opened my eyes once more as they shined in the dark.<p>

As I continued to sing more and more zombies were attracted and with each one I cut down two more took his place. All the sudden as I reached the end of the song having killed at least 50 of the monsters I heard the groan of an engine. Felling those that were within reach of me I leapt back straight into the hood of the Hummer!

Laughing I strafed along the front bumper and heard Saeko yelling at me to get in. Still riding my battle high I leapt over the rest of the hood to join her on the roof laughing all the while.

"It seems we've out stayed our welcome. What say you we find a more hospitable place to stay?" I said

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><p>Saeko's Viewpoint<p>

\* \* \*

><p>Even though he was laughing I saw a glint in his eyes. Almost unnoticeable but there all the same if you knew what you were looking at.<p>

I chuckled at his lame joke before calling to the others that we were set and could move on.

His eyes gave him away. Although he smiled and laughed at cheating death it never reached his eyes. Those eyes that had seen so much held the spark, so much like my own and yet so different. But how long could he hold it back? It was impossible to control, just as one could never control a hurricane or an earthquake. How long until he too was lost?

### 3. Separation and a history

I'm a college student. Do the math.

"Japanese"

"\_English"\_"

\* \* \*

><p>Connall awoke the next morning with the gentle lapping of waves against the shoreline and the purring of an engine as Shizuka drove the Hummer across the shallowest section of canal that they could find. Connall sat up and began his morning stretches waiting for the rest of the group to wake up and to prepare for the day.<p>

He didn't have to wait long as Shizuka made land fall with a gentle bump that woke up Takashi and Saeko, who was using Takashi as a pillow. Saya was the next to awaken and felt a strange weight on her shoulder and looking over saw Kohta using her much like Saeko and Rei

were using Takashi. She quickly put an end to it by throwing poor Kohta into the opposite side of the car which woke him up. Takashi woke up Rei after Saeko pointed out the position they were in and soon the only one left sleeping was the new girl and her dog.

They stopped once the Hummer was out of the canal and back on dry land to stretch from being crammed in the Hummer and Kohta woke up the little girl so she could take a chance to stretch her legs. Once they were all out of the Hummer Connall quickly grabbed a small bag from his pack and ran up the rest of the bank to take a lookout position. Kohta followed him interested in why he wanted such a position when he had no long range weapons. When he reached the top of the embankment he saw Connall dumping the contents of the bag on the ground revealing a plethora of laser sensors and 4 motion activated lights.

Connall looked around for the best sight lines that could cover every approach with as little equipment as possible. Seeing that there were no tunnels and that they could see any one coming from along the bank he grabbed two lasers and pointed them at the bridge pylons since so nothing could bypass them and sneak up on them. He then took the motion activated light and pointed the lights towards the Hummer and the motion sensor over the lasers so that if anything moved towards them from that direction the light would activate and give them time, however limited, to prepare for what ever was coming.

Kohta looked over the setup looking for any weak points in the simplistic set-up and upon seeing none he marveled at how well the man had covered the approaches towards the group with so little equipment. Connall smirked at the chubby boy's face as he saw an array of emotions from disbelief to awe as he overlooked the setup Connall had just made. Connall got Kohta's attention and gestured that they should join the rest of the group before they started breakfast without them.

Kohta took one last look at the setup and then followed the Connall down to the group where they could be properly introduced to the newest member of their rag-tag little band. As they approached the others food was being brought out and upon seeing that they would have to make do with a cold breakfast Rei and Takashi groaned quietly remembering the breakfast that Connall had prepared for them the day before. Connall looked at the two with a smile tugging at the corners of his lips as if knowing exactly what the two were mentally fussing about.

After they had finished their canned breakfast Takashi introduced the little girl to the rest of the group. Connall sat next to Saeko to get a translation as the rest of the group introduced themselves in turn. They introduced themselves by stating their name, age, and favorite food.

"I'm Takashi, I'm 17 and I like ramen."

>"I'm Rei, I'm also 17 and I like dango."<br>"I'm Saeko, I'm 19, and I like salad."

>"I'm Connall," He began before switching to his native language with Saeko translating, "<em>I'm 21, and I like steak."<br>\_"I'm Kohta, I'm 17, and I like pizza."

>"I'M Shizuka, I'm 22 and I like oden."<br>"I'm Saya, I'm 18 and I like sukiyaki."

After introducing themselves they all looked at the little girl in askance of who she was.

"I'm Alice, I'm 5 and I like rain drop cake." she said causing the rest of the group to chuckle at her liking of the dessert.

After finishing their breakfast and relaxing and talking amongst themselves for a little while they all piled into the Hummer with Saeko joining Connall on the roof to avoid the cramped quarters of the interior causing him to chuckle as the group had finally discovered the second biggest annoyance of the mammoth vehicle. As they drove through the outskirts the happy atmosphere of earlier was replaced with one of anxiousness and dread as the longer they drove they continued to not happen upon a single one of Them.

Finally after 3 hours of driving they happened upon their first one who was shambling across the road. Shizuka took a right at the first road only to happen upon an entire mob of them on the street. She quickly began to take random turns trying to find a clear road only to find more and more of Them as she continued. Connall looked ahead and saw that further down the street the path became clear again at the same time as Saya. Saya told Shizuka to gun the engine and run Them over and continue on since her house was not too far away. Saeko saw something different. She saw a glint of something hanging across the road and screamed for Shizuka to stop, but it was too late.

Shizuka slammed on the brakes and turned the wheel to try and avoid whatever was on the road only to put the vehicle into a skid. Connall saw they wouldn't stop in time and tripped Saeko onto the roof from her standing position before jumping on top of her and grabbing onto the roof rack with all his strength trying to keep both of them on the roof. Those inside the Hummer were not so lucky. Not using their seatbelts they were thrown about inside the unforgiving metal chassis and all of them except Alice were bruised and bloody before they could even get out of the car and into a fight.

The zombies hearing the crash from blocks around began to converge on the vehicle. Saeko was the first to react and threw Connall from on top of her and with her wooden sword advanced on the closest of Them and began to dispatch them in an effort to give the others time to act. The rest of the group began to get their bearings inside the vehicle but it was clear that they would be useless in a fight with their current wounds.

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><p>Connall's Viewpoint<p>

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><p>After Saeko threw me off of her I looked in the vehicle to ascertain the shape that the rest of the group was in. They picked themselves off of each other and the floor and looked around with glazed eyes and a confused look. Seeing the clear signs of concussions and with Shizuka being the only one in any shape to move since she was the only one wearing her seat belt I sighed knowing that if we survived this fight and if I wished to stay with them I would have to answer many questions that they were likely not going to like the answers to.<p>



I hopped off the roof and saw Saeko trying to buy the rest of the group time to recover by leaping forward into the front ranks, dispatching 2 or 3 of them before retreating out of their reach. I reached under the Hummer and grabbed a cloth wrapped object that I had had since I could remember and began unwrapping it. The zombies had closed to maybe 4 meters out by the time I had fully unraveled to full blade. It was a monstrous claymore with a demonic skull at the end of the handle and runes of death, destruction, and mayhem carved into the base of the blade. It stood at 5 foot long and had an aura of death that surrounded the blade. On one side of the cross guard were the words 'Demon Prince' in Latin and on the other was a Celtic rune meaning 'Death'.

"Saeko! Fall Back!" I yelled in a tone of voice that I hadn't used since my training days. When she fell back beside me she looked at the blade with fear, awe, and another emotion that I had never seen before. "I'll handle this. Get the others through the fence with the gear. I'll meet you guys on the other side." I lied. She nodded and when she had turned around I closed my eyes and entered a meditative state.

As time slowed around me I ignored the moans of the soon-to-be-dead, I ignored the slamming of car doors and the groans of the injured. I ventured to a door that was covered in chains and locks. It was dented, scratched, and worn but still it held. And for the first time ever I reached up and broke the chains. Behind the door was a creature wreathed in chains and cloaked in shadows. I broke the chains that bound it letting it free.

It didn't move.

"What's up?" I asked, "I'm finally giving you what you want. Full control, no restrictions."

>"I can't." It mumbled, "You've kept me here under your will for so long I can't do anything anymore. You have won."<br>"No. You have to help!" I cried, "You are the only way I can protect my friends!"

>"You know me. I'm as likely to help your friends as I am to kill them."<br>"Then what can I do? I know I can't protect them myself."

>"Then don't ask for my power. You know I've only been a place holder until you accepted yourself and your past."<br>"What? What do you mean?"

>"I'm only a figment of your mind for you to do battle with until you were strong enough to face your fear. Will you face it? Or will you let your friends die?"<br>"I...I" I stammered while It looked at me. Gathering my courage and stilling my inner turmoil I looked once more upon the creature "I will. I will face my fears and conquer them."

>"Then tell me. Who are you?"<br>Walking forward I gathered my self and stood tall. "I am Connall McLoughin. Son of the Leader of Shadows and his wife the last princess of the Land of Demons. I am the Demon Prince, He Who Hunts In the Dark. And I command you Shade, give me my power!"

As I finished my command the shade that had plagued my dreams and haunted my every battle chuckled. "As you wish my liege. Now go forth, and show the world why we are the most feared beings in existence." With that the Shade melted into the floor and my shadow

returned.

"I am complete once more. I hope the others aren't here to see this." I whispered to my self before returning to the land of Reality and back to the blood soaked days there.

Upon waking the closest of Them was closing his teeth around my throat but before he could kill me my blade slashed and his head parted ways with his body. I looked back even as the pack closed in and saw that my friends were safely behind the fence. Giving a sad smile I returned my attention to the monsters that were clamoring towards me.

"This is good-bye my friends. Take care and watch each others backs." I yelled as I slashed through the necks of the first 3 zombies. "Trust no one unless they have proven themselves. And Saeko, What you have is not a curse nor is it a blessing. It is a tool and it will be whatever you make of it."

With those last words I delved deep into my self before unleashing the beast upon those that would harm me and my friends.

\* \* \*

><p>After his farewell Saeko's eyes widened wondering how he knew. Then she relayed most of what he said to the rest of the group. They watched in awe as he raised his head and screamed a challenge to any and all they could hear. Saeko's knees quaked at the power held in that scream that the others seemed to not hear. Connall dashed forward into the depths of the monsters and began to cut them down like wheat before a scythe.<p>

Kohta who was shaking off the worst of the affects of the crash stood and looked upon the death that Connall was dishing out with a look of awe. He had not known that so much carnage was possible with a simple piece of steel. As Connall continued to cut through the hoard he got farther and farther from them. Saeko, fed up with being stuck on the sidelines, ducked through the fence of wire as a group of adults with water cannons stepped up from the rear.

Saya was the first one to get treatment for her cuts and when her caretaker removed their helmet the resemblance between them showed their relationship as mother daughter. "Lets get them back to the house and get them treated." Saya's mom said.

"What about them?" Kohta asked pointing at Saeko and Connall who were surrounded by Them.

"I'll leave a team here in case they make it through. That's the best that I can do."

As they left carrying the rest of the group to the car along with their meager belongings Kohta couldn't help but hope that his friends would come back.

\* \* \*

><p>As Connall slipped further and further from his friends he hoped that they would forgive him as he saw a zombie from the corner of his eye come from behind and knew that he wouldn't be able to parry such

an attack with his sword going the opposite direction. Then just as he finished mentally apologizing for his early death a wooden sword crushed the creatures skull form behind.<p>

He froze in shock for a moment before returning to the fight. He knew only one person who used a wooden sword and if he was right there was no way that he was going to die in front of her. At least not before he read her the riot act for ignoring him and leaping head first into danger.

As they kept up the slaughter they reached the cross roads and were quickly surrounded since the monsters could come from all sides. Realizing their tactical mistake too late Connall cursed under his breath before seeing so stairs that they could use. He quickly relayed his plan to Saeko and they began to carve a path of carnage towards the stairs. When they reached the stairs Connall ordered Saeko to go first since she was more tired of the two and Connall followed her shortly after.

The two broke off their engagement with the monsters quickly and made their way through several streets to make sure they lost Them. "I am so gonna kill you for this shit when we are safe again." Connall threatened between breathes.

"You started it when you said that what I had was a tool not a curse." Saeko replied, "I want to know what you meant and how you knew of it when we find a place to camp."

Connall groaned as they began their way through the city trying to find a path back to the others. When they stumble across an outdoor activities shop they made their way to it to scavenge for anything they could use. After clearing the showroom floors and the ware house at the back they locked all the doors and started to search for anything of use. Connall found a hiking backpack that they could use to fit everything in that was very light and then found cooking supplies and food. He then headed for the clothing section to try and get new clothes to wear since his were covered in blood and other fluids.

Saeko found the keys to a four-wheeler that would allow them to get around easier and quicker, then she headed to the clothes section to try and find something more durable than her school uniform. As she looked through the racks she heard a small scuffling sound, grabbing her wooden sword she approached one of the dressing rooms where the noise, quiet as it was, was loudest. She prepared her self to strike and yanked open the door before bringing her sword down towards its head.

"Whoah!" Connall shouted as he dropped the new underwear that he was about to put on and raised his hands in a surrendering gesture.

Saeko was stunned at the appearance of her teammate and mortified as she ogled his naked body. Her sense of modesty quickly asserted itself as she "eeped" and quickly spun around. Connall quickly closed the door before calling through it "Sorry if I scared you." Saeko replied "No its my fault, we had already checked for any of Them and I let myself think that one of them might have gotten through the barricades."

"It's better to be prepared than be caught off guard." Connall said as he exited the dressing room. "I'm gonna look around for anything else we might need. If you hear a noise yell and if I reply and the noise ain't me brain it."

"Yes. That's a good plan." Saeko replied as Connall grinned and walked away. As she looked for sturdy clothes to wear her mind kept going back to Connall's naked body. 'How is he so fit? Where did those scars come from? They look almost surgical.' She wondered to herself as she found some clothes before grabbing a dressing room. When she was naked she looked at her body in the mirror wondering when she would be able to take another bath like before at Shizuka's friends house.

After she had gotten dressed she met Connall at the front of the store. "Alright I have, hats, sunglasses, ammunition, guns, crossbow, binoculars, and a selection of clothes that should fit everyone for when it gets colder." All of this was crammed into a foot locker that Connall had strapped to the back of the four-wheeler. "Anything else we might need?"

"Nothing that I can think of." Saeko replied.

After checking everything again they made their way out of the store and up the road with Saeko giving Connall directions the whole way. As it became darker they decided to hole up in an abandoned temple. After parking the four-wheeler a block away and locking the footlocker they walked to the temple with the hiking back pack and locked themselves inside.

After a quick dinner of pre-packaged hiking meals warmed over a hot-hands pack. They sat listening to the wind blow amongst the trees for a few minutes before Saeko plucked up her courage and asked, "Where did you get those scars?"

Connall looked at her for a moment before saying rather evasively, "From a myriad of opponents many of whom would give you a run for your money."

Saeko scowled prettily before asking, "How did you know of my curse.?"

It was Connells turn to scowl. "It's not a curse. It's a tool, and for as to how I knew you had it well it takes one to know one."

"What do you mean? How do you control it? I thought it was impossible."

"To answer that question I would have to tell you my story. It's not a pretty one. Could you handle it? Could you handle knowing what humans can do to each other if they wish?"

"To know how to control this 'tool' as you call it, Yes. Yes I could."

Connall scoffed for a moment, "Alrighty then, Settle your self down and don't interrupt. To understand this burden you must understand its beginnings. It began over 2 thousand years ago..."

\* \* \*

><p>Connall spoke until the wee hours of dawn. Telling tales of daring, and tales of woe. His burden began with the Vikings of old, the original berserkers. His mother could trace her heritage back through the greatest of chieftains who were also the most fell of Vikings. Men who made rivers of blood and drank from the skulls of their enemies. His father could trace his lineage back to the original ninjas of Japan, the people of the Shadow. He focused on the Vikings first telling how if they were pushed far enough they fell into a rage that would crush all that stood before them. Be it friend or foe.<p>

That was what made the chieftains so great. They could fall into the rage and yet control who they attacked. They were the reason that in the year 1000 A.D. the Vikings were outlawed world wide. To avoid genocide they split up and joined the standing armies of the day. One day centuries later a man from those tribes joined a fight in the oriental nations. He was the most deadly warrior any one had every seen. And fearing for their lives the government hired the greatest assassin's of their time, the ninja from the Land of Shadows.

A ninja was given the assignment and went to slay the man. But for the first time since their inception, the man failed to be assassinated. They sent ninja after ninja to the man until one day three of the ninjas that they thought were dead came back. They told the tale of the man fighting them but never delivering the final blow. The princess of the land was intrigued as this was a time when cold blooded murder was the norm. She left her home that night without telling anyone of her destination. She found the man several days later in a tavern and wooed him. She led him to her room and laid with him. When he was asleep she lifted her knife and brought it down to his throat but his hand leapt up and halted her in her tracks.

After asking her why she tried to kill him she told him of the contract on his life. He merely smiled at her and released his hold on her. He knew of the contract but he enjoyed fighting. He said that if they continued to send men after him he would continue to fight. The contract merely served to help him get the fights that he wished for. Stunned at his reply she left and went home.

A week later her father found the man and with a platoon of his best men he attacked the man in a rage. It was the hardest fight of the mans life. After defeating all the men but the father he asked why they attacked in a group instead of one at a time like was the norm for assassinations. The father replied that it was no longer about the contract but familial honor. He had killed his daughter so his life was forfeit. Greatly confused the man said that he had let the daughter go almost a fortnight ago. The father looked into the mans eyes and seeing no sign of deceit believed that the man was telling the truth.

The father then began to rage that the emperor would pay. He was the only one who could make his daughter disappear so easily. The emperor had wanted his daughter for years but the father had always declined the offers of marriage. What better way to get both the man he was afraid of dead and the prize of the ninja leaders daughter. Hearing this the warrior was furious to the point that his aura was visible. He had taken a personal vow many years ago to end rape no matter how

long it took. The warrior stepped up to the aggrieved father and bowed to one knee before drawing his short sword.

The warrior drew the sword across his arm before grabbing the ninjas right arm in an unbreakable grip and slicing into it with ease. Grabbing leaders arm he began to recite a prayer and at the end of the prayer he looked the aged ninja in the eyes and said "This I swear to you, as long as I draw breath and as long as my blood flows upon this earth your daughter will be brought home. No matter what is in my way, for there are not enough demons in hell, angels in heaven, or humans on earth that will stop me from rescuing your daughter. I, Ailis Cael, so swear this."

Upon completion of his pledge Ailis left with his weapons and armor and marched upon the capital. He sliced through the front gates and then massacred all that stood between him and the emperor. After killing his soldiers the warrior gave a simple ultimatum to the emperor, give me the princess of the ninja or watch as your kingdom falls forever.

The emperor caved and told Ailis where the princess was, and upon finding her he decapitated the emperor in front of his son with the threat that if he tried anything he would meet the same fate along with his entire kingdom. And so the warrior rescued the princess and after returning her the leader invited him to join their clan. Ailis accepted and many years later married the princess that had tried to kill him.

\* \* \*

><p>Those were my great-grandparents. They are the ones that gave me the Rage as we call it. As for my scars, They are another story entirely.<p>

\* \* \*

><p>When I was a boy I was trained on how to kill, with the least amount of effort for assassinations by my father, and how to fight against entire army's from my mother. I was gifted in the art of death gaining my sword at the age of 6, Connell said as he patted his sword. Then it all changed my families compound was attacked and even with my great skill there were simply too many for me to fight against. I was separated and overwhelmed.<p>

I was forced to work for an organization known as Vigilate Mortem which is Latin for Death Watch. They wanted to control the world and the easiest way to do that was to put their own puppets into leadership. Which is where I came in, They threatened my family and forced me to assassinate whoever they wanted whenever they wanted. Whenever I even slightly disobeyed them they tortured me. I've been burned, whipped, beaten, starved, and worse. I was stuck in that life until about 3 weeks ago. I found out that they never had any of my family captive. They lost over three-quarters of their forces just getting me. I was young and easily swayed to try and protect my parents. Once I found out I grabbed my sword and rose up against my captors, they had become lax over the years believing me broken. Stupid fools, my family may bend but we never break.

I was trying to find my family when this plague broke out. It would have taken me at least 3 months just to find my family with the world

recording every single move people make, now unless I stumble upon them I will never find them again. And that's not to mention that Vigilante Mortem is still looking for me. They have more resources and assets than you could possibly imagine. If you see this symbol, Connall said as he drew a celtic knot with another celtic knot inverted inside it, they are my clan. But this symbol, he said as he drew a stylized heart that looked much like the symbol on the Full Metal Alchemist cloak, they are Vigilante Mortem. Do not hesitate around them, just run, if they try to stop you kill them for they will show you no mercy.

\* \* \*

><p>As he wound down from his story telling he saw that Saeko was in shock as to the history of his family and his own. When she gathered her wits she looked at Connall with a new fire in her eyes.<p>

"Can you teach me how to harness the Rage?" Saeko asked.

"I can try. I've only really harnessed it once and that was earlier today."

"That's ok. Anything you can teach me I can use. After all its my families motto, 'Take what's useful, discard what's not, add what is uniquely yours'.

"If that's what you want. But for now lets get some rest. We need to find our friends again in the morning."

Saeko smiled knowing that she was able to bring Connall back to the group. She would have missed him too much otherwise. She thought with a blush as she slipped off into the arms of Morpheus.

End  
file.